

Congressman Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY)

Opening Statement for R&D Hearing

July 21, 2005

I want to welcome everyone here today to hear from our witnesses who are true captains of industry and intellectual leaders.

The reason for this hearing should be clear; we want to send a message; if we don't invest today in science, technology, and education then our economy simply will not continue to thrive. Happily, we have some key allies in Congress in promoting this message such as Chairman Frank Wolf and his fellow appropriator John Culberson. But we have more work to do to ensure that all of Washington understands what's at stake.

We live in financially constrained times in Washington. The jockeying for federal funds gets more intense every year. We need more forceful and more vocal advocates, both inside and especially outside of government if research and education are to get the attention they need.

Today's hearing is just one effort among many to raise the profile of these issues. Many associations have gone into high gear, and I want to draw particular attention to the National Innovation Initiative of the Council on Competitiveness, which is now moving into a legislative stage. Also, we hope the Innovation Summit this fall which Dr. Ehler's and I are working to put together with industry groups, thanks to Chairman Wolf, will also galvanize support.

This is a critical time for research and education as Congress and the Administration are working on both the fiscal 2006 and 2007 budgets. We need to act now if future generations are to enjoy the standard of living that leaders like our witnesses today have brought to the United States.